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UNCLAS HARARE 001197

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICAN DIRECTOR C. COURVELLE, D.TEITELBAUM
LONDON FOR C.GURNEY
PARIS FOR C.NEARY
NAIROBI FOR T. PFLAUMER

E.O 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [ZI](#) [MDC](#)

SUBJECT: ANOTHER OPPOSITION MP ARRESTED

REF: (A) HARARE 858 (B) HARARE 716 (C) HARARE 693 (D)
HARARE 553

1. (U) GOZ police arrested MDC MP for Glen Norah, Priscilla Misihairambwi - Mushonga on July 15. Misihairambwi was asked to present herself to the Law and Order section at Harare Central Police station at 9:30 am. Charged under the Miscellaneous Offences Act, she is accused of having breached the peace by using threatening abusive language or behaving in a threatening manner while brandishing a pistol in connection with an incident involving a man in her constituency. Misihariambwi was released at 7 pm after spending nine hours in police custody.

2. (SBU) Lawyers for Misihairambwi advised the Embassy on July 15 that Misihairambwi denied the allegations. Misihairambwi's attorney said that she had been arrested for trying to investigate allegations of assault in her constituency. MDC members of her constituency who had been assaulted by two Zanu-PF members approached Misihairambwi for help. On July 13, the MP assisted these individuals in making a report to Glen Norah police station and then approached an unidentified man, who was alleged to be one of the assailants. This unidentified man later reported to the police that Misihairambwi had threatened him with a gun.

3. (SBU) According to the lawyers, police searched the MP's home and offices last night but failed to locate a pistol. The police will continue to investigate the matter and proceed by way of summons if they feel that she has a case to answer.

4. (SBU) COMMENT: ZANU-PF pressure on MDC MPs takes on many guises and is increasing across the board in the run up to next March's scheduled parliamentary elections. Misihairambwi is the third MDC MP in the last few months to fall victim to the GOZ's systematic strategy of intimidating the opposition through arrest on apparently trumped up charges. A very active Chairperson of the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee, Misihariambwi is a popular, outgoing politician who is highly regarded in diplomatic circles. Other MDC MPs arrested this year include Job Sikhala (ref B), Evelyn Masaiti (ref C), and Ben Tumbare-Mutasa (ref D), while Roy Bennet faces potential incarceration over his involvement in a fracas on the floor of parliament (ref A). In most cases, proceedings do not result in a conviction but their existence absorbs the opposition's time and resources while generating fodder for the relentless GOZ propaganda mill.

SULLIVAN